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Received  
Jan 20, 1981

# A NEW GENUS OF AFRICAN STARLINGS

By  
HARRY C. OBERHOLSER



SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE  
CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 81-82, plate XVII  
Issued, September 30, 1930  
CLEVELAND, OHIO



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The ornithological collection of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has been much enriched by the specimens of birds that have from time to time been received from Mr. Kenyon V. Painter, who is one of the Trustees of the Museum.

These birds are chiefly desirable foreign species that have died in his aviary, some of them rare and difficult to obtain in any other way. This aviary has been a lifelong interest of Mr. Painter's, and in it he has a collection of rare and attractive foreign birds, many of which have been gathered by him personally in Africa and elsewhere. It is said to be the best private aviary in the United States. In the course of these activities he has also placed many rarities in American zoological parks.

Among the specimens donated to the Cleveland Museum is an adult male of that beautiful African starling, *Spreo superbus* (Plate XVII), which proves to be generically different from *Spreo*. Since the type of the genus *Spreo*<sup>1</sup> is *Turdus bicolor* Gmelin, and since the same species is also the type of the only synonym, *Notauges* Cabanis and Heine<sup>2</sup>, the generic group represented by *Spreo superbus* Rüppell is without a name.

We therefore take pleasure in naming this genus in honor of Mr. Kenyon V. Painter, of Cleveland, Ohio, as a slight token of appreciation of his generous interest in the bird collection of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

**Painterius, gen. nov.**

*Generic characters.*—Similar to *Spreo* Lesson, but exposed culmen

<sup>1</sup> *Spreo* Lesson, *Traité d'Ornith.*, March 1, 1831, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Notauges* Cabanis and Heine, *Mus. Hein.*, I, 1851 (after October 23), p. 198.

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equal to hind toe with claw (instead of decidedly shorter); 4th, or 4th and 5th, primaries (instead of 3d) longest, 2nd primary shorter than 5th (instead of longer), the wing formula thus  $6 < 2 < 3 < 4 =$  (or  $>$ ) 5 (in *Spreo [bicolor]*,  $6 < 5 < 2 = 4 < 3$ ), counting from the outermost primary; 5 (instead of 4) primaries sinuate on outer webs; notch on inner web of primaries very pronounced (instead of weak); palate smooth just anterior to angle of gonys (instead of more or less ridged throughout); feet reaching to end of tail (instead of somewhat shorter); tail relatively shorter, only  $\frac{9}{16}$  of wing (instead of  $\frac{2}{3}$ ); tail much less strongly rounded, the graduation amounting to only  $\frac{1}{8}$  (instead of  $\frac{1}{6}$ ) of the tail; lower tail-coverts relatively longer, falling short of the tip of the tail by about  $\frac{3}{5}$  (instead of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the length of the tarsus; and plumage more metallic in luster.

Type.—*Lamprotornis superbus* Rüppell.

Remarks.—We have examined all the species commonly referred to *Spreo*, excepting *Spreo fischeri* (Reichenow), which, to judge from descriptions and plate, belongs in *Spreo* proper as here restricted. The only species, other than the type, which appears to belong in *Painterius* is *Turdus pulcher* Müller. The species composing this new genus, therefore, are:

*Painterius superbus* (Rüppell).

*Painterius pulcher* (Müller).

It may not be out of place in this connection to note that Sclater recently<sup>3</sup> has again placed *Spreo albicapillus* Blyth in *Spreo*, where, however, it seems almost as little at home as in *Heteropsar*, where it was allocated by Sharpe. It has good characters of its own, which appear to entitle it to segregation in *Poneropsar*, a monotypic genus already provided for its reception<sup>4</sup>. These characters will be found fully explained in connection with the original diagnosis of *Poneropsar*<sup>5</sup>.

This species, *Poneropsar albicapillus*, seems, by the way, not to be common in collections; and it is another of the rare birds that Mr. Painter has contributed to the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

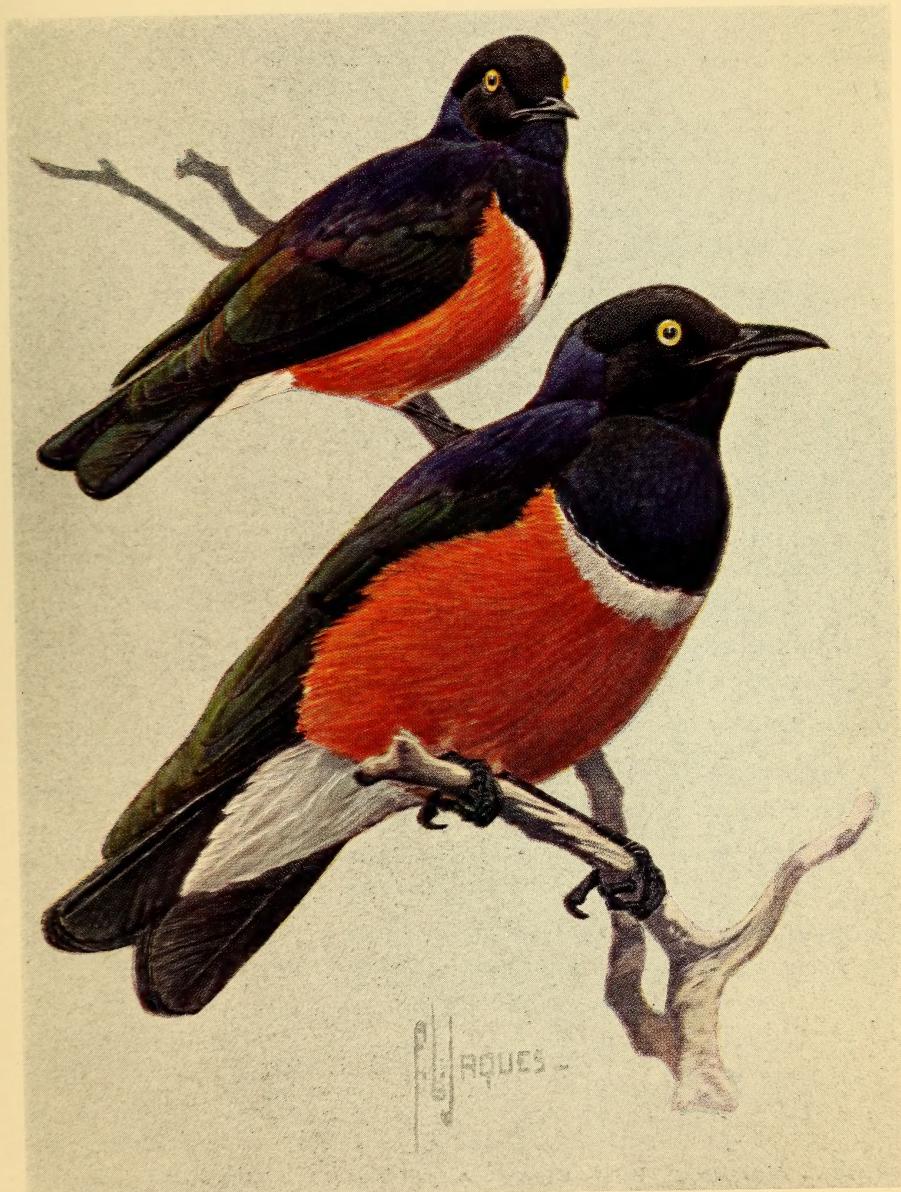
<sup>3</sup> "Syst. Avium Ethiopicarum, II, January 11, 1930, p. 668.

<sup>4</sup> Oberholser, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXVIII, July 8, 1905, p. 888.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 887-889.

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PAINTERIUS SUPERBUS (Rüppell)













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